

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 8 are amended and claims 10-12 are added.

I. Claims Objections

Claim 8 is objected to because of informalities. By this Amendment, claim 8 has been amended to address the informalities. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the objection be withdrawn.

II. 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1-5 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Buisson (EP 0945672). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Buisson fails to disclose a signaling device for a motor vehicle with a skin capable of protecting a bodywork of a vehicle and presenting an outside face to be seen from the outside of a vehicle when the device is mounted on the vehicle, and a rib projecting from its inside face, the rib having a thickness greater than the thickness of the skin, as recited in claim 1.

Buisson fails to disclose all of the features recited in claim 1 because skin 24, when mounted on a vehicle, is covered by item 17 as shown in Figs. 1, 3-7 and 9-10 of Buisson. As shown in Fig. 1, item 17 prevents surface 24b from being seen from outside a vehicle upon which it is mounted.

Furthermore, Buisson's rib 20 does not have a thickness that is greater than the thickness of skin 24. The Office Action measures the thickness of rib 20 from the outside face to the inside face of the rib. However, the specification of the application makes clear that the distance from the inside face to the outside face of a rib is actually a height, and that the thickness is measured from the "top" to the "bottom" of the rib (relative to the orientations of Fig. 1). "[T]he words of the claim must be given their plain meaning unless applicant has provided a clear definition in the specification." MPEP §2111.01. Applicants have made

clear in the specification that rib 11 has a height that is greater than the depth of housing 2. See Specification at page 5, lines 14-16 and page 6, lines 3-8. The specification also states that rib 11 has a substantially rectangular cross-section, thus making clear that thickness would be determined from an orientation perpendicular to the height, as shown in Fig. 1. See Specification at Fig. 1 and page 5, lines 26-31 and page 6, lines 3-4. Applying a correct reading of independent claim 1, the thickness of Buisson's rib 20 (measured along a line from the top left corner to the bottom right corner of Fig. 8) is clearly not greater than the thickness of skin 24, as shown in Fig. 8 of Buisson.

Also, Buisson's skin 24 is contained behind surface 17, as shown in Fig. 1 of Buisson. Buisson's skin 24 is interior to the vehicle shown in Fig. 1, and thus cannot be able to perform a function of protecting a bodywork of a vehicle.

III. 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over Schwanz et al. (EP 1022187). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Schwanz fails to disclose all of the features recited in claim 1 because the thickness of rib 28, in Fig. 3 of Schwanz, is not greater than the thickness of skin 9. Whether measured as asserted in the Office Action (from outside face to inside face) or by the orientation discussed above, the thickness of rib 28 as shown in Fig. 3 is clearly not greater than the thickness of skin 9.

Furthermore, the Schwanz device is a side flashing lamp that is plainly contained within or behind the bodywork of a vehicle. As shown in Fig. 2 of Schwanz, skin 10 is located next to or behind bodywork item 1. The Schwanz device is thus not able to perform a function of protecting a bodywork of a vehicle.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Buisson and Schwanz fail to disclose all of the features recited in independent claim 1, as well as the additional features recited in the dependent claims thereof. It is respectfully requested that the rejections be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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